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East Germans Deny They Killed a Top West German Agent

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BONN, Feb. 1 — East Germany has taken the unusual step of denying that it eliminated a top West German agent reportedly betrayed by a West German official who defected last year.

The East German Government's press agency denied Friday that the the agent, who has not been identified, had been killed as a result of information supplied by the defector, Hans Joachim Tiedge, a West German internal security official.

The agency was responding to testimony last week in a West German parliamentary inquiry by the former chief of the West German internal security agency, Heribert Hellenbroich.

The East German press agency said Mr. Hellenbroich had told "a fairy story." "He need not worry about the alleged top agent, since he never existed," the agency said.

Mr. Hellenbroich was dismissed as head of the security agency after it was disclosed that he had kept Mr. Tiedge on despite a history of alcoholism, debts and family problems.

Mr. Hellenbroich told the parliamentary inquiry into the Tiedge affair that he assumed the agent "is no longer alive, even if I have not seen the body."

The East German press agency, making the first mention of Mr. Tiedge since reporting his defection in August, hinted that he might soon give a full account of his activities.

"Tiedge," it said, "can give the lie to Hellenbroich's stories about the German Democratic Republic by statements that have not yet been published."

Mr. Tiedge has not been seen since he defected to East Germany. His teenage daughters are believed to have visited him at Christmas.

In parliamentary testimony on Friday, Holger Pfahls, the new head of the West German internal security agency, also challenged Mr. Hellenbroich's contention that a West German agent in East Germany had been eliminated.

Mr. Pfahls said Mr. Hellenbroich's comments had aroused "considerable irritation" among NATO intelligence services, which had also found no proof that an agent had been killed by the East Germans.